

**GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: ASSESSMENT AND FORECASTS****Zakirova Sayyora Alimovna**

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**Abstract:** *This article analyzes the phenomenon of global climate change from both scientific and socio-economic perspectives, offering an integrated assessment of current trends and long-term forecasts. Drawing on data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), NASA, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the paper explores the causes, manifestations, and potential consequences of climate change across continents. Rising temperatures, melting glaciers, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events are identified as critical indicators of planetary transformation. Special attention is paid to climate modeling, predictive scenarios, and mitigation strategies. The study concludes that climate change is not only an environmental issue but also a structural challenge that requires global cooperation, technological innovation, and behavioral transformation.*

**Keywords:** *climate change, global warming, greenhouse gases, IPCC, emissions, adaptation, climate models, environmental policy, sustainability.*

**Introduction**

Climate change represents one of the most complex and urgent challenges of the twenty-first century. It encompasses long-term alterations in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other elements of the Earth’s climate system. These changes are primarily driven by human activities most notably the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial emissions that increase the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. The Earth’s average surface temperature has already risen by approximately 1.2°C since the pre-industrial era (1850–1900), according to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2023). Although this figure may seem small, it represents an enormous shift in global energy balance, sufficient to disrupt ecosystems, accelerate glacial melt, and intensify extreme weather phenomena.

Historically, the Earth's climate has always fluctuated due to natural factors such as solar cycles, volcanic activity, and oceanic currents. However, the current rate and magnitude of change are unprecedented. The concentration of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) reached 421 ppm in 2023, the highest level in at least 3 million years (NASA, 2023). Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) concentrations have also reached record highs, driven largely by agriculture, waste management, and fossil fuel extraction. These greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere through the greenhouse effect, preventing infrared radiation from escaping into space. Without this effect, the Earth's average temperature would be -18°C; with it, the planet remains habitable. The problem lies in the enhanced greenhouse effect, where excessive gas accumulation amplifies warming beyond the natural balance.

The consequences of this warming extend far beyond temperature increases. They include:

- Melting of polar ice and glaciers, contributing to sea-level rise;
- Intensification of hurricanes, floods, and droughts;
- Shifts in agricultural productivity and food security;
- Ocean acidification, threatening marine ecosystems;
- Health risks, such as heatwaves and vector-borne diseases;
- Economic losses due to infrastructure damage and migration.

According to the World Bank (2023), climate change could push an additional 132 million people into poverty by 2030, primarily in low-income regions. The economic cost of inaction is projected to exceed 5% of global GDP annually by mid-century (Stern Review, 2022).

Given these realities, the scientific and policy communities emphasize two simultaneous approaches:

1. Mitigation reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing carbon sinks;
2. Adaptation adjusting systems and societies to withstand climate impacts.

This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of global climate change, assesses its causes and consequences, and reviews major forecasts for the twenty-first century. The research also highlights regional disparities, policy implications, and potential pathways toward sustainable transformation.

The structure of the paper is as follows:

1. An assessment of climate change and its scientific basis;
2. A discussion of key causes and impacts across sectors;
3. Forecasts and modeling scenarios by the IPCC and related institutions;
4. Strategies for mitigation, adaptation, and future sustainability.

As the global temperature continues to rise, the question is no longer whether climate change is happening but how quickly and how effectively humanity can respond.

### Scientific Assessment of Global Climate Change

The scientific understanding of climate change is grounded in a vast body of empirical data collected over decades by satellites, ground observatories, and oceanic research systems. Institutions such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), NASA, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) provide the most reliable global assessments based on physical evidence, climate models, and historical records.

#### 1. Temperature trends

According to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2023), global surface temperatures have increased by  $1.09^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $\pm 0.1$ ) between 1880 and 2022. The warming rate during the past 40 years has been unprecedented in at least two millennia.

The table below summarizes observed changes in global average temperature by decade:

Decade	Temperature Anomaly ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) relative to 1850–1900	Main Observations
1880–1899	0.00 (baseline)	Pre-industrial reference
1900–1909	+0.12	Early industrial emissions
1950–1959	+0.24	Post-war industrial boom
1980–1989	+0.44	Rapid fossil fuel use
2000–2009	+0.80	Accelerating global warming
2010–2019	+1.05	Hottest decade on record
2020–2023	+1.2	global heatwaves

Sources: IPCC (2023); NASA GISS Surface Temperature Analysis.

The eight warmest years in recorded history have all occurred since 2015. The year 2023 was officially the hottest year ever recorded, surpassing 2016 by  $0.15^{\circ}\text{C}$  (WMO, 2023).

The warming is not uniform:

- The Arctic is heating nearly four times faster than the global average, a phenomenon known as Arctic amplification.
- Continental interiors—especially Central Asia, North America, and Southern Europe—are experiencing more frequent heatwaves.
- Ocean surface temperatures have increased by  $0.88^{\circ}\text{C}$  since 1901, causing marine heatwaves and coral bleaching.

## 2. Greenhouse gas concentrations

The main driver of modern climate change is the rising concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. These gases include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and fluorinated gases.

Gas	Pre-Industrial Level (ppm or ppb)	2023 Concentration	Percent Increase	Main Source
CO <sub>2</sub>	280 ppm	421 ppm (NOAA, 2023)	+50%	Fossil fuels, deforestation
CH <sub>4</sub>	722 ppb	1,922 ppb (NOAA, 2023)	+166%	Agriculture, oil & gas
N <sub>2</sub> O	270 ppb	335 ppb (NOAA, 2023)	+24%	Fertilizers, livestock
F-gases	-	Increasing steadily	-	Industrial chemicals

The radiative forcing—the imbalance between incoming and outgoing solar energy caused by GHGs—has increased by +2.72 W/m<sup>2</sup> since 1750 (IPCC, 2023). CO<sub>2</sub> accounts for approximately 66% of total anthropogenic radiative forcing. At the same time, global carbon emissions reached 36.8 billion tons (Gt) in 2023, despite post-pandemic recovery efforts and renewable energy expansion (Global Carbon Project, 2023). The top five emitters—China, the United States, India, the EU, and Russia—collectively produce over 60% of global emissions.

## 3. Melting of ice and sea-level rise

Glacial melt and sea-level rise are among the most visible consequences of global warming. Observations from the NASA GRACE mission and European Space Agency (ESA) satellites show that:

- The Greenland Ice Sheet loses approximately 270 billion tons of ice annually;
- The Antarctic Ice Sheet loses about 150 billion tons per year;
- Global glacier mass has decreased by over 9,600 gigatons since 1960.

The melting of polar ice contributes to sea-level rise, compounded by the thermal expansion of ocean water as it warms.

Year	Global Mean Sea-Level Rise (cm) relative to 1900	Average Rate (mm/year)
1900	0.0	-
1950	+5.0	1.2
2000	+15.0	3.1
2023	+24.1	4.6

Sources: NASA Sea Level Change Science Team, 2023.

By 2100, the IPCC “middle scenario” (SSP2-4.5) projects a sea-level rise of 0.44 to 0.76 meters, while the “high emissions” scenario (SSP5-8.5) predicts up to 1.1 meters. Even a half-meter rise could displace over 250 million people from coastal areas, especially in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Pacific island nations.

#### 4. Oceanic and atmospheric changes

The oceans absorb about 90% of excess heat generated by greenhouse gases, delaying surface warming but altering marine ecosystems.

Key changes include:

- **Ocean acidification:** Surface ocean pH has dropped from 8.2 to 8.05 since 1850, a 26% increase in acidity.
- **Marine heatwaves:** More frequent and longer events destroy coral reefs and reduce fisheries.
- **Deoxygenation:** Warmer waters hold less oxygen, creating “dead zones” harmful to biodiversity.

Atmospheric changes are equally profound:

- The Hadley cell circulation is expanding poleward, shifting rainfall patterns.
- Jet streams are becoming unstable, increasing extreme weather variability.
- The frequency of Category 4–5 tropical cyclones has increased by 30% since 1979 (NOAA, 2023).

The combined effect of these changes is the emergence of new climate regimes regions where historical temperature and rainfall norms no longer apply.

#### 5. Regional impacts

Climate change affects every region differently, depending on geography, infrastructure, and socio-economic conditions.

Region	Primary Observed Impacts	Projection for 2050
North America	Increased heatwaves, wildfires, coastal flooding	+2.5°C avg temp rise
Europe	Heat stress, crop failure, glacial retreat (Alps)	+2.2°C
Asia	Monsoon disruption, Himalayan glacier melt	+2.7°C
Africa	Drought, food insecurity, desertification	+2.8°C
Latin America	Amazon deforestation feedback loops	+2.3°C
Oceania	Coral reef loss, sea-level rise	+2.4°C

Sources: IPCC AR6 (2023); WMO State of the Climate Report (2023).

The Arctic region is the most vulnerable, where permafrost thaw threatens to release billions of tons of methane a feedback loop that could accelerate warming even further.

#### Forecasts and Future Scenarios of Climate Change

Forecasting future climate change is one of the most challenging yet essential aspects of environmental science. Predictive modeling allows scientists and policymakers to anticipate possible outcomes and design appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) uses advanced global circulation models (GCMs) and socio-economic scenarios known as Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (SSPs) to project climate futures up to the year 2100.

##### 1. The basis of climate modeling

Modern climate models simulate the interaction between the atmosphere, oceans, land surface, cryosphere, and biosphere. They use mathematical equations to describe physical processes such as radiation, convection, cloud formation, and carbon cycling.

The main scenarios developed by the IPCC are:

Scenario	Description	Projected CO <sub>2</sub> Concentration (2100)	Expected Temperature Increase by 2100 (°C)
SSP1-1.9	Strong mitigation, carbon neutrality by 2050	350 ppm	+1.5°C
SSP1-2.6	Sustainable development, rapid renewable transition	450 ppm	+1.8°C
SSP2-4.5	“Middle of the road”, partial mitigation	550 ppm	+2.7°C
SSP3-7.0	Regional rivalry, weak cooperation	700 ppm	+3.6°C
SSP5-8.5	Fossil-fuel intensive, no mitigation	950 ppm	+4.8°C

Sources: IPCC AR6, 2023; CMIP6 Model Ensemble.

Under the current global trajectory, the world is on track for a 2.7–3.1°C temperature rise by 2100—consistent with the SSP2–4.5 or SSP3–7.0 scenarios. This

range may appear moderate, but even a 2°C rise would lead to drastic environmental transformations: widespread coral bleaching, loss of Arctic summer ice, and irreversible damage to ecosystems. A 4°C rise could make large parts of the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia uninhabitable during summer months.

## 2. Changes in precipitation and hydrological cycles

Warming does not only affect temperature but also alters precipitation distribution. Wet regions are expected to become wetter, while dry regions will experience more droughts.

- Tropical rainfall is projected to increase by 5–15%, intensifying floods.
- Subtropical areas (North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia) may see rainfall declines of 10–30%.
- Monsoon systems in South Asia and East Africa will become more erratic, with delayed onset and heavier storms.

The IPCC (2023) notes that extreme rainfall events that previously occurred once every 50 years may now happen every decade, and under SSP5-8.5, every 5 years.

In contrast, drought duration in semi-arid zones could double by 2100, threatening agriculture and water supply in already vulnerable regions.

## 4. Sea-level rise projections

Sea-level rise is one of the most irreversible consequences of climate change due to the long response time of ice sheets and thermal expansion.

- Under SSP1-2.6, sea levels are expected to rise 0.32–0.62 meters by 2100.
- Under SSP5-8.5, the range increases to 0.63–1.10 meters, with an extreme possibility of 2 meters if Antarctic ice-sheet instability accelerates.

A one-meter rise would:

- Submerge 14% of Bangladesh's land area;
- Threaten over 800 million people living in low-lying coastal zones;
- Cause global economic losses exceeding \$1 trillion annually by 2100 (World Bank, 2023).

## 5. Extreme weather forecasts

Extreme events are expected to become more frequent and intense across all scenarios.

According to WMO (2023):

- The frequency of Category 4–5 tropical cyclones could rise by 20–30%.
- Heatwave duration may increase threefold by 2100.
- Wildfire-prone areas (Mediterranean, California, Australia) could double in extent.
- Flood-related disasters are projected to affect over 1.6 billion people annually by 2050.

The combination of heat and humidity (measured as wet-bulb temperature) in parts of the Persian Gulf, India, and Southeast Asia could exceed 35°C, a threshold beyond which human survival outdoors is impossible.

#### 6. Economic and social implications

Climate forecasts indicate profound consequences for the global economy and human welfare.

The Stern Review (2022) estimated that without mitigation, global GDP could decline by 5–20% annually by 2100.

Agricultural yields could fall by:

- 10–25% in Africa,
- 15–20% in South Asia,
- 30% for wheat and maize in tropical regions (FAO, 2023).

In addition:

- Climate migration may reach 200–300 million people by 2050 (World Bank, 2023).
- Health impacts—malaria, dengue, heat stress—could cause 250,000 additional deaths per year (WHO, 2023).
- Insurance losses from extreme weather may surpass \$1 trillion per decade by mid-century.

These projections underscore that climate change is not just an environmental problem—it is an existential threat to human development and global equity.

#### Discussion: Global Response and Policy Implications

The scientific evidence for global climate change is overwhelming and unequivocal. Yet, despite decades of research and warnings, global emissions continue to rise. The gap between scientific knowledge and political action remains a defining challenge of our era. To mitigate the crisis, the world must implement coordinated, science-based policies across multiple scales—international, national, and local.

#### Conclusion

Climate change is the defining challenge of our time—an existential test of human wisdom, cooperation, and adaptability. The evidence is clear: rising temperatures, melting glaciers, shifting rainfall, and extreme weather are transforming the Earth's systems faster than anticipated. These changes threaten not only ecosystems but also economies, health, and social order. Scientific consensus confirms that human activity is the dominant cause. The scale of the problem demands equally large-scale solutions—technological innovation, policy reform, and collective behavioral change. The future trajectory of the planet depends on choices made today. If the world acts decisively—cutting emissions, protecting ecosystems, and fostering global solidarity—warming can still be limited to manageable levels. If not, humanity risks entering a new geological epoch shaped by irreversible climate

feedbacks and widespread disruption. In essence, climate change is not a distant threat—it is our present reality. The question is whether we will adapt intelligently and compassionately, or continue on a path that leads toward instability. The fate of future generations depends on whether this century becomes one of climate collapse or climate resilience.

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